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SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNGA](#) [PM](#)
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR HEAD OF STATE-LEVEL DEMARCHE BY
AMBASSADOR

¶1. This is an action request for the Ambassador or
Charge.

OBJECTIVE

¶2. To seek tangible improvements in UNGA voting by Panama
as part of a targeted effort to engage 17 friendly
countries whose UNGA voting records vary sharply from
their close relations with the United States. The President
and the
Secretary have endorsed this initiative.

ACTION REQUESTED

¶3. To align Panama's voting record more
closely with that
of the U.S. on key votes, the Ambassador or Charge' is
requested to meet with the Head of State, upon his return
from UNGA, and deliver a demarche bringing his attention
to Panama's low voting coincidence with the U.S. (when
not including consensus resolutions). If the
Head of State is not available to receive the demarche
within a reasonable time, the meeting should be held with
the Foreign Minister.

TALKING POINTS

¶4. Ambassador or Charge may draw on the following points:

-- As allies, the United States and Panama
cooperate and work closely together in many areas. (Post may
add specific examples at its own discretion). We have many
ties of friendship as well as common hopes,
principles, and values.

-- Yet in 2007 Panama voted with the U.S.
in the UN
General Assembly only 14.3 % of the time, when not
including consensus votes.

-- The United States views the United Nations as having
great potential for achieving progress on many issues. If
agreement and widespread support among Member States can
be reached for balanced and responsible resolutions,
decisions, and other initiatives it would make the UN more
effective and a more credible voice in the world.

-- We understand that some votes may be explained by
solidarity with regional groups or blocs based on other
factors, but, in our view, such solidarity often appears
inconsistent with the national interests and policies of
your government outside the unique culture of the United
Nations.

-- As the new session of the UN General Assembly begins, I

hope you will bear in mind that in the U.S. both the President and the Congress view UN voting coincidence as a barometer of the closeness of a bilateral relationship.

-- In the coming weeks I hope we can begin a dialogue between our experts and yours on how we might better improve cooperation on issues of importance before the UN.

End Points.

BACKGROUND ON THIS INITIATIVE

15. Key issues of importance to U.S. policy interests are being brought increasingly to vote in the UN. These include human rights, the UN budget, Israel, and development assistance. At the same time, the Group of 77 (G-77) and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) bloc is more unified and votes consistently against the U.S. The Department and other agencies have been working on a long-term strategy to counter these developments in the General Assembly. A key element of the Department's strategy is the delivery of demarches at the most senior level in 17 select capitals on UNGA voting records, U.S. priorities, and areas where we might work together more effectively. This is the first requested demarche, which seeks tangible improvements in UNGA voting by the host country. Details on each UN Member State's most recent voting records are available on the Department's website at www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/c25867/.htm in the annual report to Congress entitled "Voting Practices in the United Nations 2007." The Department and other agencies believe that the diversity of national interests and ideologies outside the UN can be translated into better voting inside the UN through friendly but assertive approaches to G-77/NAM countries that have reasonably good relations with the U.S.

RICE